RIVALRY ESCALATES
Darien, New Canaan athletes' social media trash talk ends in assault charges. B1

YANKEES MANAGER
The Yankees have chosen former player Aaron Boone as their next manager. C1

SAMUELSON READY
UConn's Katie Lou Samuelson is expected to be available against No. 3 Notre Dame. C1

WEATHER ★★
Partly cloudy, highs in the mid-40s. A2

Hartford Courant

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GUILTY PLEA IN RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Flynn To Help In Probe

Admits Lying To FBI, Implicates 'Very Senior' Member Of Trump Team

SUSAN WALSH | ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORMER national security adviser Michael Flynn, center, arrives at federal court in Washington Friday where he pleaded guilty to making false statements to the FBI about his contacts with the Russian ambassador.

By CAROL D. LEONNIG, ADAM ENTOUS, DEVLIN BARRETT and MATT ZAPOTOSKY
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Former national security adviser Michael Flynn pleaded guilty Friday to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak and, in an ominous sign for the White House, said he is cooperating in the ongoing probe of possible coordination between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin to influence the 2016 election.

When Flynn was forced out of the White House in February, officials said he had misled the administration, including Vice President Mike Pence, about his contacts with Kislyak. But court records and people familiar with the contacts indicated he was acting in consultation with senior Trump transition officials, including President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, in his dealings with the diplomat.

Flynn's plea revealed that he was in touch with senior Trump transition officials before and after his communications with the ambassador.

The pre-inauguration communications with Kislyak involved efforts to blunt Obama administration policy decisions — on sanctions on Russia and a U.N. resolution on Israel — potential violations of a rarely enforced law.

Flynn said in a statement: "It has been

FLYNN, A4

EVAN VUCCI | ASSOCIATED PRESS

WHITE HOUSE senior adviser Jared Kushner listens to President Donald Trump during a cabinet meeting Nov. 1. Kushner is the "very senior transition official" referenced in court papers filed in the Michael Flynn case.

UNIVERSITY PROTEST

MARK MIRKO | MMIRKO@COURANT.COM

IN THE WAKE of Lucian Wintrich's speech titled "It Is OK To Be White," UConn students gather outside university President Susan Herbst's office to protest what they say was a failure by the school to respond appropriately to the far-right speaker's appearance.

MARCH FOR ACTION

UConn Students React To Wintrich Event, Incident

By REBECCA LURYE
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About 200 members of the UConn community marched on campus Friday protesting the university's response to a far-right commentator's provocative talk earlier in the week.

Lucian Wintrich's event, titled "It Is OK To Be White," was a platform for ignorance and bigotry masquerading as academic discourse, said speakers at Friday's March for Action. They were particularly critical of UConn President Susan Herbst, who released a statement Thursday defending UConn College Republicans' right to invite Wintrich to campus.

Many of the student speakers said Herbst waited too long to address them.

They chanted, "Admin silence, this is proven. Do you really love us, Susan?" and carried signs proclaiming, "Silence is Violence."

Herbst responded after the march, saying, "We always encourage our students to exercise their free speech rights, just as they did today. UConn must be

UCONN, A4

ACTION IN CONGRESS

GOP Tax Bill Gets Votes In Senate

Flurry Of Deals Sways Republican Holdouts

By ALAN FRAM, MARCY GORDON and STEPHEN OHLEMACHER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans used a burst of eleventh-hour horse-trading to edge a nearly $1.5 trillion tax bill to the brink of Senate passage Friday, as a party starved all year for a major legislative triumph took a step toward giving President Donald Trump one of his top priorities by Christmas.

"We have the votes," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., declared after leaders swayed holdout senators by agreeing to fatten tax breaks for millions of businesses and let people deduct local property taxes.

The final vote had not been taken by press time on the measure, which would set up negotiations with the House for a final package. The measure focuses the bulk of its tax reductions on businesses and higher-earning individuals, gives more modest breaks to others and would be the boldest rewrite of the nation's tax system since 1986.

Republicans touted the package as one that would benefit people of all incomes and ignite the economy. Even an official projection of a $1 trillion, 10-year flood of deeper budget deficits couldn't dissuade nearly all GOP senators from rallying behind the bill.

TAX BILL, A4

WEST HARTFORD HOLDUPS

Polite Bandit Confesses

Admits To Robbing Same Store Four Times

By JOSH KOVNER
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Sixty-two-year-old Robert Escobar wrote "please" on robbery notes and readily admitted when confronted by detectives that he committed four videotaped robberies of the same gas station convenience store — wearing green Nike sneakers each time — saying he had a bad heart, survived colon cancer, and had relapsed on heroin.

Arrest records released Friday describe how a neighborhood man recognized Escobar's face on a flyer that police were passing around, and how detectives were finally able to zero in on him. Escobar let the investigators into his apartment on Oxford Street in Hartford, two blocks from the Sunoco station on Farmington Avenue in West Hartford, sat down at his kitchen table with them, and in minutes admitted to all four robberies over a six-month span, the last one on

BANDIT, A5

WEST HARTFORD POLICE

ROBERT ESCOBAR was charged in four robberies at a West Hartford Sunoco.

Deficit Trigger
The state's deficit hits a "balance the books" level. **Connecticut, Page B1**

Propane Bus
Propane-powered school buses have pluses, but upfront costs worry school systems. **Business, Page A7**

Bold 'Native Son' At Yale
The Yale Rep's "Native Son" sets a new tone for the classic Richard Wright story. **Living, Page B10**

CLASSIFIED.....M1-M4 | LOTTERY.....A2 | OBITUARIES.....B4-B5
COMICS.....B8-B9 | MOVIES.....B7 | PUZZLES.....B9

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